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After the Aisle

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The story of Walker Zimmerman '15 and Sally Tucker '15 started out as many romances do — except for one unique complication: Walker was already a star when he walked onto campus. As a top 25 soccer recruit, he was destined for Major League Soccer.

But for the moment, during orientation, he was just a first-year student, and a fellow student had caught his eye.

"During the president's picnic, I remember seeing a girl with blond hair in a pink-polka-dot dress," he says. And it didn't take long for Sally to notice him.

"I saw him at one of their preseason games during orientation and thought he was cute," she says.

In a campus community as intimate as Furman's, the two inevitably crossed paths, but it would be midway through their first fall semester before they were introduced. "I had a class with Kevin Pahl, one of Walker's teammates, and we ran into Walker when we were walking back from class. I knew who he was just because of the buzz around him, but I never thought I'd meet him. Kevin introduced us, and I told Walker I'd been to every game. Then he thanked me for my support," Sally laughs. "It was so awkward."

The attraction was mutual. "I'd seen her around campus and I wanted to get to know her, so when we were



A WINNING MATCH



Sally and Walker Zimmerman

BY ANDREW HUANG '11

introduced, I was really excited," says Walker. Then came a serendipitous turn of events. He was studying with **Jordan Sanders '15**, a classmate who would become a good friend. "As we're finishing up our study session, I asked if he knew anything about Sally, and it turned out she was one of his best friends."

In true millennial fashion, Sanders texted Sally a cryptic winking emoji and walked with Walker to her dorm room. "That's the first time we really hung out and had a conversation, and from that day on, we basically saw each other every day the rest of our time at Furman," says Walker.

Still, the future loomed. From national team camps to potential playing opportunities in Europe to his goal of being drafted by Major League Soccer, the only guarantee was that Walker would have to leave.

In a way, the uncertainty helped solidify things.

"Never knowing when he was going professional added an extra intensity," says Sally. "We connected so well from the beginning, I just had a peace about how things were going to end up. I just didn't know how the middle was going to go."

Sally's upbringing helped, too. Her father is the Baltimore Ravens' head team physician, so she was already familiar with the lifestyle of professional sports. "It didn't scare me to date him," she says.

FC Dallas selected Walker seventh overall in the 2013 MLS SuperDraft, and soon he was off to Texas. For the next four years, the two dated long-distance as Sally finished her bachelor's and master's degrees in education. In the spring of 2016, Walker proposed to Sally at the bench by the Furman Lake where he had first asked her to be his girlfriend. They were married in December 2016 at Grace Church Downtown in Greenville, South Carolina.

With a trade to Los Angeles FC in 2017, Walker and Sally moved across the country from their alma mater — a huge transition, but one the couple continues to enjoy. ♦